

## SUGAR

Blo bzang ལྷོ་བཟང་།

She died two years ago. Every time she told my sugar story, she ended it with loud laughter. At that time, I didn't understand the humor in the story. Now, there is no more laughter.

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I played with Brother, Rdo rje, and other friends on the ice from morning to afternoon. When we realized that we needed to go home, our shoes and trousers were wet. We were cold and hungry. Just the two of us were in the house. Pieces of bread and some dumplings were in the pot and still warm. We ate it all.

We both knew that Mother kept a little white sugar for the New Year. If Brother and I obeyed her, she gave each of us one spoonful of white sugar as a reward. "Bso pa, should we eat some sugar?" said Brother, quietly with a smile.

I agreed, so we took sugar out of a wooden box Mother had put on a high shelf. "Don't tell Mother. If she knows that we are eating sugar, she'll kill us," said Brother.

After eating the sugar, we went to Uncle's family, where Grandmother, Aunt Bkra lo, and Mother were separating yak hair.

"Where have you been? Have you had lunch?" asked Mother loudly.

"We ate all of the food in the pot, but we didn't eat any sugar," I replied.

Brother turned and stared at me. Mother looked at me and turned to look at Brother.

"Our naughty boys ate all my sugar!" cried Mother angrily.

"We didn't eat sugar," said Brother confidently.

Mother stood up.

"Did you eat all of the sugar?" asked Grandmother with a smile.

"No, we just ate a little," I replied quickly.

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†Blo bzang. 2019. Sugar. *Asian Highlands Perspectives* 58:419-420.

They all laughed.

From that time, this story became her "funny story" to share with others. She told it countless time, her laugh ringing out as clear as a bell when she ended with "And then he said, 'We ate just a little.'"

I long to hear that laughter again.

#### TIBETAN TERMS

blo bzang ལྷོ་བཟང་།

bkra lo བཀྲ་ལོ།

rdo rje རྡོ་རྗེ།